

Fact Sheet

Kids Come First Phase II

Kinship Care

Safety

Permanency

Engagement

Child and Family Well Being

Adolescents

> **Kinship Care**

Recruitment & Retention

Consultation & Collaboration

Array of Services

Quality Assurance



Improving the lives of children and youth at risk

SUCCESS STORY

ISSUE

Children in kinship care experience fewer placement changes, stronger connections to family and are less likely to re-enter care compared with children in non-kinship out-of-home care. Children's Administration has limited capacity to search for and engage relative/kinship families and lacks adequate supporting services for kinship care providers.

OUTCOMES

- ♦ Kinship families receive increased support

\$1 million
0 FTE's

FUNDING REQUESTED TO

- ♦ Increase access to support services for unlicensed relative caregivers
- ♦ Other funding requests that support this outcome area (see Permanency Fact Sheet):
 - ♦ Establish dedicated relative search staff positions in each region to find potential relative resources
 - ♦ Establish regional post-adoption and post-guardianship resource centers to prevent placement disruptions

RESULTS OF NON-FUNDING

- ♦ Fewer relatives may be able or willing to provide care for children resulting in greater number of children entering and re-entering foster care, weaker connections with families and less timely permanency
- ♦ Fewer supports to prevent post-adoption and post-guardianship placement disruption and children re-entering out-of-home care
- ♦ Non-compliance with the Braam foster care lawsuit settlement agreement regarding increasing the appropriate use of kinship care, improving kinship support services, hiring relative search staff and establishing a post-guardianship support program and regional resource centers for post adoption, kinship and guardianship families
- ♦ Failure to meet federal requirements regarding placing children with relatives

A sibling group of five children entered the foster care system in December 2000. Through the hard work of Children's Administration staff, a grandmother was located who was willing to raise all five children on her own. The grandmother and her husband not only had to meet the standards to obtain a foster care license, they also had to find housing that was affordable yet suitable for five children whose ages ranged from four to 12 years old. This grandmother not only met the standards, but surpassed them. She made it very clear to the social worker that, no matter what, these children would be first in her life. Through her hard work and with the support and efforts of the social worker, the grandmother officially adopted the children in July 2004.



Safe
Kids
in
Healthy
Families

Children's Administration

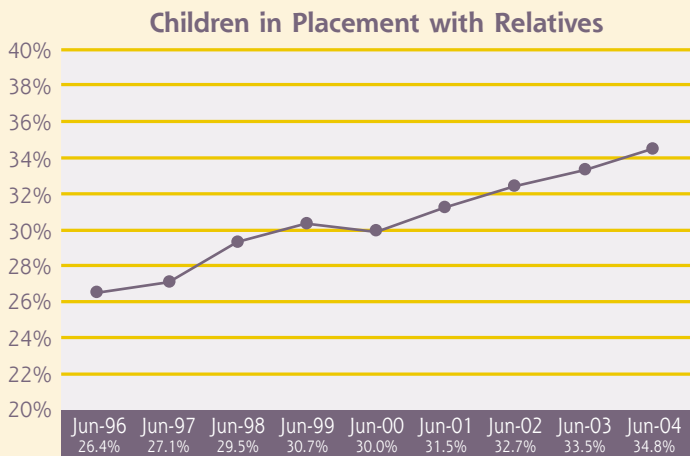
RESEARCH

Relatives play an essential role in helping to meet the needs of children who are unable to live with their parents. The connection to family, relatives, and community is important to a child. Children can live with people they already know and trust and can maintain their personal and cultural identity. Relatives participate as responsible and integral members of the child and family's support team. *Kinship Family Foster Care: A Methodological and Substantive Synthesis of Research*, Gary S. Cuddeback, University of Tennessee, documents the many benefits of kinship care:

- Children have more stable placements compared with children in non-kinship care.
- Children are less likely to re-enter care compared with children in non-kinship care.
- Kinship placements may be better at initiating and maintaining contact with birth parents and this is significant as some studies have shown that children who received visits from birth parents were more likely to be reunified or have other successful discharge outcomes (i.e., adoption) than children who did not receive visits from birth parents during placement.
- Kinship homes may be less likely to maltreat than non-kinship homes.
- Children placed in the homes of relatives may be safer from further maltreatment compared with those children left in their birth homes.

Families adopting special needs children are understood to experience challenges and life-cycle stages which are unlike those of biological families (Victor Groze, *A One and Two Year Follow-Up Study of Adoptive Families and Special Needs Children*, Children and Youth Services Review, 1996). Post-adoption/guardianship services have been found to play an important role in providing these families with resources that lessen the risk of adoption and guardianship failure.

Children placed with relatives have more stable placements and are less likely to re-enter care compared with children in non-kinship care. (*Kinship Family Foster Care: A Methodological and Substantive Synthesis of Research*, Gary S. Cuddeback, University of Tennessee)



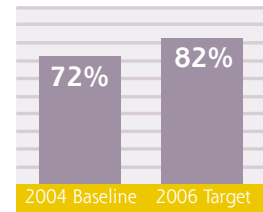
IMPROVING OUTCOMES

Federal Case Review

Permanency Outcome 2

The continuity of family relationships and connections is preserved for children

Relative Placement



Percent receiving a rating of "strength."